Book Reviews

Editorial note: Book reviews are edited for typographical errors, and otherwise are printed as received.

Reviews

EVERYTHING WAS BETTER IN AMERICA: Print Culture in the Great Depression. By David Welky. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 2008.

The Great Depression sparked some of the most important reform movements in American history. In explaining this change, historians have frequently focused on writers and activists on the political left. Surveying what he calls the print mainstream, David Welky notices something else. "Partly consciously and partly unconsciously," Welky argues, "mainstream newspapers, magazines, and books offered interpretations of contemporary difficulties that urged readers to adhere to ideological roots that drew from deep traditions rather than drift into the perilous seas of reform and perhaps revolution" (4). Distinguishing himself from Michael Denning's *The Cultural Front*, Welky sees a mainstream media spreading comfortably conservative messages about faith, family, tradition, resilience, and perseverance.

In attending to how mainstream media could uphold traditional pieties, and undermine pluralist, liberal, or radical alternatives, Welky is undoubtedly correct. Welky's book is a welcome reminder of how much of the mainstream media reacted to the Depression by seeking to reaffirm platitudes about American democracy, individualism, and traditional values. If his work leaves us wondering how to explain the substantial political reform that did occur, it helps to understand why the reforms were limited in important ways.

The mainstream media Welky investigates includes the newspaper, magazine, and book industries. After surveying each industry, Welky offers sometimes surprising and often interesting case studies. Conventional choices such as *Life* magazine or *The Grapes of Wrath* are complemented by analyses of the 1932 Olympic games and the daily comic strip "The Gumps." In his most interesting chapters, Welky does more than locate conservative messages. Instead, he shows the ways conservative and progressive messages could both proliferate in the same locations. Here he

comes closest to recognizing the messiness of cultural production, and his account is persuasive.

Nevertheless, Welky's overall book is unsatisfying in three important ways. First, he sets too high a bar for what constitutes reform. At times, as in his discussion of the racial and gendered assumptions that filled coverage of the athlete Babe Didrikson, Welky seems to assume that if the New Deal was truly radical then racism and sexism should have disappeared. Second, Welky operates from a fairly vulgar assumption that media content was controlled by the interests of the "great interests of capital" (17). "To alienate big business with talk of revolution was to commit economic suicide," Welky asserts (12). Yet this assumption is little help in explaining the actual content of mainstream publications. For example, *Fortune* magazine, a magazine marketed to big business, called for a "radical capitalism" that would involve the "joint control of industry by workman and employer" (August 1931). Third, Welky treats an emphasis on family and family-based security as entirely conservative. Yet "conservative" invocations of family often provided a basis for radical criticism of an existing order that failed to protect families.

Recently, Nick Salvatore and Jefferson Cowie have argued that the New Deal era's liberal reforms marked a "long exception" from the conservative, individualist norms in American life. Welky goes even further, claiming liberal reforms were mere "howling winds" etching the face of an enormous iceberg made up of the nation's underlying conservatism (5-6). This goes too far. Welky helps us understand the limits of reform; he leaves us wondering, however, how any reform was even possible.

Cornell University Robert Vanderlan

LIQUIDATED: An Ethnography of Wall Street. By Karen Ho. Durham and London: Duke University Press. 2009.

About a month into the Occupy Wall Street demonstration in Lower Manhattan, the *New York Times* asked a barefoot protestor and a stockbroker in a pinstripe suit to share their political views over drinks of cappuccino and Snapple. (Guess who had which? It's not what you think). Most people working on the Street are not "fat cats," the broker insisted, "They're guys like me who work hard every day; every nickel I make, I work hard for." Readers of Karen Ho's extraordinary ethnography will recognize this shibboleth for what it is: the mantra of those habituated to an institutional culture in which "overwork is a normative practice" (99), a belief in "money meritocracy" obscures the "hypermobility" of white men (112), and a sense of "personal exemplariness" (41) underwrites staggering indifference to the social suffering caused by their own activities. That the employees of Wall Street's financial firms are themselves subject to the downsizing they foist upon other American workers only reinforces, Ho tells us, their dedication to "efficiency"—by which they mean "the set of practices which most quickly and cheaply . . . lead directly to increasing stock prices" (163).

Liquidated is a must-read book for anyone interested in how legions of recruits from Ivy League colleges come to espouse and enact the twisted bundle of class

interests and market ideology that constitutes neoliberal capitalism. Based on a stint at Bankers Trust in 1997, fieldwork from 1998 to 1999, and interviews with over 100 investment bankers, Ho offers an insider's account of how Wall Street's organizational culture fueled that decade's bull market as well as today's economic crisis. Central to her analysis is an illuminating dissection of the sacred cow of "shareholder value"—the belief that a manager's top priority should be to increase stock prices because shareholders "own" the corporation and should therefore "control" it. Ho deftly shows that this "capitalist myth-making" (179) has allowed Wall Street to "gain control of corporations" (188) and subject them to its own agenda, despite the fact that its manic deal making often fails to produce shareholder value (164).

While Ho is adept at spotting the "origin myth" that governs her informants' worldview, she is less attuned to the narrative of origins that animates her anthropology. Driven to explain *why* Wall Street inflicts liquidation on corporate America and itself, Ho relies on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "habitus," or embodied dispositions, to develop the convoluted claim that "investment banks' organizational culture produces (and is produced by) their [bankers'] self-understanding as embodiments of the market, as the ultimate 'liquid' employee" (252). Ho therefore locates the origin of practices that result in liquidation in a "habitus of downsizing" which is enacted by individuals whose culture compels them to believe that they "are" the market they perform (292). The circularity of this argument leaves little room to imagine how change in the world of investment banking might come about—or how protesters sleeping in parks might ever spur the nation to hold Wall Street accountable for the havoc it has unleashed.

Yale University Kathryn Dudley

MUHAMMAD ALI: The Making of an Icon. By Michael Ezra. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 2009.

Why another book on Muhammad Ali, Michael Ezra asks in the introduction to *Muhammad Ali: The Making of an Icon*. After all, for the past generation the Guinness World Record outfit has listed Ali as the most written-about person in history. And as hard as that is to believe—where does Guinness get such information?—it very well may be true. Certainly, during the last half century Ali has been the most recognizable face in the world. And there was a time not very long ago when a person's opinion of Ali was a barometer to his or her political, social, and cultural beliefs. Still, for all that, academic historians have written surprisingly little about the boxer/activist. Writer Thomas Hauser's oral biography *Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times* (1991) remains the best life treatment of the man, and journalist David Remnick's *King of the World: Muhammad Ali and the Rise of an American Hero* (1998) is still the finest attempt to assess the importance of the fighter. In addition, Gerald Early's admirable *The Muhammad Ali Reader* (1998) does not include a single selection from an academic historian. To the best of my knowledge, the only effort by academics to come to terms with Ali are the essays in Elliott Gorn's edited *Muhammad Ali, the People's Champ* (1998).

Ezra attempts to turn the attention of the academy to a serious, sustained study of Ali. His is not a biography. Rather it examines three aspects of Ali's life—"his pre-championship boxing matches, the management of his career, and his current legacy" (1). In seeking to explore these aspects, Ezra focuses upon Ali as a "moral authority," a powerful cultural, political, and financial force. This last point is Ezra's most important contribution. He asks the obvious—but seldom studied—question: Who benefited financially from Ali's image? As Ezra demonstrates, if one follows the money trail, he or she will come closer to understanding the real meaning of Ali. The money trail never moves in a straight line. Ezra begins with a detailed examination of the Louisville Sponsoring Group, the white businessmen who controlled the early years of Cassius Clay's boxing career. He then considers the role played by the Nation of Islam during the middle part of Ali's career. And he finishes with an investigation of the people who have tried, sometimes at cross-purposes, to shape and benefit from Ali post-fighting career. Occasionally, Ezra's concern for the financial bottom line becomes limiting; money, in the end was not very important to Ali, and it might not have always been the overriding factor in those close to him. There were many different agendas. Financial gain was just one of them. Still, Ezra's study is original and incisive, based on a wealth of primarily newspaper and secondary sources. It's a book that opens windows rather than shuts doors, a study that says much and reminds the reader that much remains to be said.

Purdue University Randy Roberts

SCHOOLING CITIZENS: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America. By Hilary J. Moss. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2009.

A half century ago, Bernard Bailyn exhaled a long sigh of frustration over the history of education in *Education in the Forming of American Society* (1960). The story of schools, he wrote, had been told as if they were "self-contained entities" completely disconnected from other developments in American history. Schools were explained as democratic and progressive institutions, leaving scholars with virtually "no historical leverage on the problems of American education." With this book, Bailyn, along with Lawrence Cremin, opened a riotous debate about the origins and results of public education in the 1960s and 1970s. A cadre of revisionists such as Michael Katz challenged the orthodoxy that school reform was democratic, progressive, and promoted social mobility. Their critics defended the idealism of reformers such as Horace Mann. Sadly, the energy and creativity of this debate failed to connect the history of schooling with the mainstream of American historiography as Bailyn had hoped. To this day, beyond the small group of scholars devoted to the history of education, remarkably little is known about schooling in early American society, especially beyond New England, which for many historians has meant Massachusetts.

Hilary J. Moss's *Schooling Citizens* follows in the tradition of Bailyn and others who have argued that the history of education belongs at the heart of American history. Moss's larger interest in race and citizenship in the early Republic led her to examine schools in three very different cities—New Haven, Baltimore, and Boston.

Like earlier scholars, she finds the case study is best-suited to the history of education, and like them, she defines "education" primarily as "schooling." Schooling in the nineteenth century, as today, was an intensely local matter, with local conditions and context making all the difference. Moss argues that the early Republic was "a critical moment when many of Americans' most deeply held ideas about public education took root" (5). Why, she asks, did public schools and opposition to educating free black Americans expand simultaneously in the early nineteenth century? She explains this apparent paradox by arguing that, contrary to the enduring and heroic myth, "the promise of public schooling for all was a fiction from the start" (193). Her study thus confirms what scholars of education have long argued.

Moss holds out the intriguing possibility that "white opposition to African American education was never a foregone conclusion" (10). In the eighteenth century, she shows, black education was far less controversial than it was by 1830. So why did this change? Her answer is that by the mid-antebellum period, education was primarily intended to create citizens. In this new context, educating free black people became dangerous to white majority. The pattern has been repeated many times in American history. As Alexis de Tocqueville observed, the "prejudice which repels the Negroes seems to increase in proportion as they are emancipated" (59). Through her careful study of three communities, Moss puts some historically specific flesh on white racism in the early U.S. Deep anxiety about notions of citizenship lay at the heart of the violent disputes about public schooling. White reformers never intended common schools to spread social equality. Instead, their vision of "universal" education was limited to citizens, and because black children were excluded from citizenship, they had little need for education. Against this narrow vision and fully comprehending its political significance, African American leaders energetically pursued access to public schools.

Moss's most important contribution is to study black education in the slave city of Baltimore, relying on a careful reading of apprenticeship contracts, advertisements, and census records. Her findings confirm what historians have long argued—that the presence of slavery in the upper South sometimes afforded free black people there more (albeit sharply qualified) freedoms than free blacks enjoyed in free states. Unlike the white residents of New Haven and Boston, white Baltimoreans seemed relatively unconcerned about black academies because slavery guaranteed the continued subordination of black people. Yet the free black literacy rate of 75 percent was a result of self-learning rather than schooling. And because the number of readers was the same among skilled and unskilled workers, there was apparently little, if any, economic advantage to literacy. The motivation to learn to read and write, then, was not primarily economic, but Moss does not pursue the question of what those motives were.

The paradox that Moss sets out to resolve—narrowing opportunity for black students in the context of expanded access to public schooling—has long been known to historians. Public schools were controversial precisely because they were about more than teaching basic literacy and practical knowledge; they were one of the most important socializing institutions in the new republic. Moss seems oddly disengaged

from the huge body of work written in the last several decades that is deeply critical of early educational reformers. More than three decades ago, Michael Katz and other revisionists decried the conservatism of school reformers on race and class. Jean Baker's classic study of political culture argued that public schools were from the beginning conceived as laboratories of citizenship, both in terms of curriculum and classroom governance; educational historian Jonathan Zimmerman has recently explored the romantic vision of American education embodied in the symbol of the one-room schoolhouse; John McGreevy and others have examined the deeply rooted prejudice against Catholics in the school reform movement. In short, there is a long and rich critical historical tradition of American education that demonstrates that the goal of schooling was never unqualified freedom or equality. Moss's notes suggest she wrote the book in conversation primarily with historians of African Americans, who have focused their interest in education on the period after emancipation. This might explain the oddly incongruent reception of the book. While a senior historian of education shrugged at its findings, historians of African Americans have hailed the book as groundbreaking.

Yet if the book falls short of its historiographical claims, the implications of her findings are valuable on at least two other counts. First, Moss's research confirms the important difference between schooling and learning in the early Republic and it suggests the rich possibilities of focusing more carefully on how people conceived of the uses of learning, particularly self-education. If free blacks were often prevented from attending schools, neither could the majority of white American children attend schools in this period. Both white and black Americans pursued self-learning with a vengeance that has eluded historians largely because of the difficulty of documenting individual learning outside of institutional records. Joseph Kett's important study is one of the few to document the long history of self-education in the United States. In the early national period, free blacks founded scores of literary societies in northern cities in the antebellum period, such as the Philomathean Society in Boston and the Phoenix Society in New York. Working Americans attended night schools and listened to paid lectures by grammarians and other scholars, and used scarce monies to buy books from itinerant booksellers because they valued learning. As Moss suggests, learning did not necessarily bring economic opportunity. So why did these people pursue it? Many learned for religious reasons, while others pursued knowledge for its own sake. Women were among those who sought learning most intently in this period without an overt political goal. Focusing on the political context of public schooling cannot account for this rich array of motives for learning in the early Republic.

A final implication of Moss's work is the importance of viewing literacy as something other than, in Frederick Douglass' famous words, the path to freedom. Moss found that literacy was used by those in power to keep African Americans, free and enslaved alike, in their place. Literacy could compromise, as well as further, individual freedom. This finding opens up the complexity of power and education; the power of literacy was contingent rather than absolute in nineteenth-century society. In an important essay, Dana Nelson Salvino argued that while literacy sometimes enabled the physical freedom of black people (as when they used it to escape to free

states), it could not free them from cultural or economic bondage. Salvino suggests that ultimately, African Americans accepted a white ideology of literacy that equated reading with freedom and that this ideology ultimately served the economic interests of white people. Adam Fairclough has similarly argued that black education did little to empower African Americans after emancipation, observing that learning in the era of Jim Crow was not the end of the struggle for freedom, but only one means to it. Knowing how to read and write without political and economic power is not enough. As Moss points out, "education alone could not break down other forms of legal and economic exclusion" (195). This is a conclusion that scholars devoted to the power of the written word find difficult to accept, but it suggests that the burdens we reflexively place on public education are too heavy.

In the end, this well-crafted study's most important contribution is to confirm that the history of education should indeed, be at the center of American history. Scholars need to engage one another beyond narrowly defined fields and disciplinary boundaries such as that of the history of education and African American history. The more we can talk to each other across these artificial and unnecessary divides, the richer our histories will be.

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville Beth Barton Schweiger

SLAVES TO FASHION: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity. By Monica L. Miller. Durham and London: Duke University Press. 2009.

Black dandyism, as here described, is a self-conscious strategy of performance designed to draw attention to the social, cultural, political and occasionally legal structures that determine how people identify themselves and recognize others. In *Slaves to Fashion*, Monica L. Miller outlines the phenomenon from its origins on the eighteenth-century London stage when a blackface character, Mungo Macaroni, introduced to audiences a smartly dressed, "sassy, back-talking, physically comic slave" (28). Miller traces the black dandy across the Atlantic, where he appeared in nineteenth-century slave festivals and on the minstrel stage, then was transformed on the pages of black American literature in novels by Charles Chesnutt, W. E. B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, and Wallace Thurman. In a fifth and final chapter we leap in time to find the black dandy back in Britain. There, starting in the late 1980s, visual artists – Isaac Julien, Lyle Ashton Harris, Iké Udé, and Yinka Shonibare – have taken the legacy of black dandyism as their subject and revived it into a kind of "Afro-cosmopolitanism."

By tracking black dandyism over three and a half centuries, Miller "hope[s] to demonstrate that the vicissitudes of black style result less from fashion or the simple turn from one consumption-fueled trend to another than from the constant dialectic between both black and white efforts at black representation and intraracial or intrablack conversations about self and racial identity and representation" (25). The book in fact gives greater weight to the former, with an emphasis on black dandyism as a social or political practice that is subject to and structured by the white gaze (a point that the visual artists in the final chapter treat explicitly in their work, drawing

on the insights of Frantz Fanon). Thus the chosen texts from the Harlem Renaissance, for instance, are concerned with passing and with international struggle over the "color line." Miller concludes, in the case of Du Bois, that his use of the black dandy figure in *Dark Princess* (1928) "looks back or looks black to the earliest moments of anxiety about black presence and mobility in global economic and political networks" (175).

Miller leaps over most of the twentieth century, and therefore omits the zoot suiters, dandies of the 1960s and 1970s, and hip hop performers. Her rationale for this decision is that the collision of dandyism and mass consumer culture diminished the black dandy's ability to signify successfully on structures that shaped identity, especially those of gender, sexuality, and class (17, 222). This is a pity, I think, because such a discussion would have done much to illuminate some of the same structures that determined the "liberatory" potential of the black dandy, which was always, as Miller argues, circumscribed by circumstance.

Having gestured toward the demise of the dandy after the Harlem Renaissance, Miller uses her fifth chapter as something of a seventy-page epilogue, which contemplates a group of visual artists whose fascinating work plays with the very limits of dandyism in a capitalist world. Although that chapter begins with a brief survey of the contents of the book thus far, *Slaves to Fashion* would benefit from a proper conclusion drawing out the significance of this broad survey. As it is, the reader works hard to trace the argument over the long time period and to assess the continuities and changes in the styling of black diasporic identity. That work done, however, the book provides a provocative account of some truly memorable individuals and of a phenomenon that provides a wide, clear window onto the history of black style.

Monash University (Australia) Clare Corbould

TABLOID VALLEY: Supermarket News and American Culture. By Paula E. Morton. Gainesville: University of Florida Press. 2009.
TABLOID, INC.: Crimes, Newspapers, Narratives. By V. Penelope Pelizzon and Nancy M. West. Columbus: Ohio State University Press. 2010.

The continuing scandal involving the British tabloids—that began last summer with revelations of illegal hacking of voice mail and payoffs to police by the *News of the World*—starkly illustrates the depths to which some so-called journalists will go in pursuit of a story.

The saga began with revelations that the Sunday tabloid *News of the World* had accessed voice mails of murdered teenager Milly Dowler and even erased some which gave family and police false hope that she was still alive, as well as messages left for family members of dead British soldiers.

The more upscale daily *Guardian* had been pursuing the story of illegal conduct by the tabloids since 2002. Already, an editor of the *News of the World* and private investigator employed by the paper had been jailed for hacking into phones used by the British Royal Family.

The earlier disclosures, for the most part, met with shrugs. "Too many of us . . . winked in amusement at the salaciousness," wrote U.S. journalist Carl Bernstein (of Watergate fame) in *Newsweek.* This time, though, the public reaction on both sides of the Atlantic was different.

Some speculated that had to do with a perception of dishonoring the dead and abusing the powerless. "It ceases to be a game when it impacts on people who have no power and no money and have suffered enormous misfortune," said Emily Bell, a professor at Columbia University's journalism school, told *The New York Times* (July 9, 2011). Bell, director of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, is the former director of digital content for Guardian News and Media, the British newspaper company.

The decision by News Corp., controlled by international media mogul Rupert Murdoch, ultimately to shut down the *News of the World* further signaled the significant difference: The paper, which brought in about a billion dollars a year in revenue, was the best-selling Sunday newspaper in Britain with a circulation of 2.7 million.

The police bribery, invasions of privacy, inordinate coziness with political figures that mark the ever-widening scandal—in the name of competitive and giving readers what they want—all seem to mark a new low in the excesses of the press in pursuit of exclusive information. Or were they simply the 21st century manifestation of long-observed phenomena? The scandal also raises such questions as: Was this an idiosyncratic and exclusively British phenomenon?

And, even more pressing, could it happen here?

Certainly it can—and has. There's no way to quarantine such practices on the other side of the Atlantic. But at the risk of being labeled a Pollyanna by some media critics, I'd say an emphatic "no" if asked whether such practices have become widespread here.

That's not to ignore examples of questionable—even illegal tactics by U.S. media.

The *National Enquirer* came under scrutiny after it published details of Farrah Fawcett's cancer that seemed to come straight from her medical records. A hospital worker later pleaded guilty to a felony for accessing her file. It is common practice at the *Enquirer* to pay sources thousands of dollars, and sometimes tens of thousands of dollars, for such information.

Among the mainstream media, the Chiquita Banana case involving the *Cincinnati Enquirer* comes to mind. According to the *American Journalism Review* (September 1998), in that case the paper backed away "from a year of painstaking research because, it alleged, reporter Mike Gallagher had illegally tapped into Chiquita's voice mail system and used information he obtained as a result in stories questioning Chiquita's business practices in Latin America."

And certainly too-cozy relations with police departments—to say nothing of Dumpster-diving in search of celebrity and gossip-driven journalism—continue to exist. But the sort of widespread misconduct that has emerged in the British newspaper case is unlikely in America's whistle-blowing culture. Too many journalists knew about it for it to be kept quiet in a media culture such as ours. U.S. law, too,

gives publications more protection, making American tabloid reporters less likely to resort to illegal means to gather news.

Still, as both *Tabloid, Inc*. and *Tabloid Valley* make clear, before there was the Murdoch influence on American journalism, there were publications known for their "gray" information-gathering practices.

Tabloid Valley and *Tabloid, Inc.* couldn't be more different. First, they deal with very different niches within the broad category of newspapers—the tabloid press—tthat is defined both by the size of the newspaper and its content and newsgathering tactics. If only the books had somehow also shown each other's strengths. For serious scholars of the media, *Tabloid, Inc.* is clearly the more important work; *Tabloid Valley*, though, is entertaining and readable.

Rather than dismissing the major New York tabloids of the 1920s and 1930s (the *Daily News*, the *Daily Mirror* and the *Evening Graphic*) as candy for the masses, *Tabloid, Inc.* traces the influence of the tabloids on crime fiction and film, including the classic James Cagney and other gangster movies and, more significantly, later works of *film noir*—which reached a broader American and international audience. The work is ground-breaking. As the authors put it, ". . . [T]heorists have examined how narratives are constructed, how they influence their audiences, how they influence one another, and how they are interpreted, relatively little attention has been paid to how narrative elements move across media, genres, or modes of differing cultural prestige" (17).

It cites, for example, coverage of the trial of housewife Ruth Snyder who persuaded her lover to help her murder her husband. The case officially ended with Snyder and Judd Gray being executed in 1928 but, in effect, lived on. That tabloid news coverage was the inspiration for James Cain's novella *Double Indemnity*, published by Knopf in 1936, and for the 1944 film of the same name.

The book also examines work of crime photographer Weegee and its transition from tabloid to critically acclaimed glossy coffee-table book to museum exhibition, finding in that transition a particularly strong example of the elevation of cultural prestige.

Another segment of the tabloid world—the weekly supermarket tabloid—is the subject of *Tabloid Valley.* Its title comes from the concentration of these publications' headquarters in Palm Beach County, Florida. As its publisher notes on the book's jacket, "For a time in the 1970s Tabloid Valley was to pop journalism as Silicon Valley later was to personal computers."

Its approach is heavily chronological as it tells the stories of the *National Enquirer* (recent circulation: 659,562) and other tabloids owned by Generoso Pope Jr. (as well as Rupert Murdoch's entry in the market, the *Star,* which was later sold to the *Enquirer*'s parent company American Media Inc.). Most interesting is the discussion of the calculated decision by the *Enquirer*'s owner to transition from a genre characterized by blood and gore to one that would appeal to the suburban supermarket audience.

The book provides fascinating detail about the *Enquir*er's biggest scoops, including the 1977 photo of Elvis in his coffin and the 1987 story of philandering

presidential hopeful Gary Hart, as well as its lesser exclusives, many of which have involved the practice—*verboten* by most mainstream news outlets—of paying for information.

Equally intriguing—if for different reasons—is its look at the loony surrealism of the now-defunct *Weekly World News*, which took the tabloid concept to new levels with headlines such as "Bat Child Found in Cave," "Half-human half-fish are washing up in Florida!" and "Elvis is Alive!"

The lasting influence of the *Enquirer* and its ilk on the mainstream is far greater than many would like to admit. Coverage in recent decades of such stories as JonBenet Ramsey's murder, O. J. Simpson's trial, John Edwards' extra-marital affair and the life and death of Princess Diana are proof of that.

The "tabs," as they're sometimes called, continue efforts to broaden their audience. The *Enquirer* operates a YouTube channel, for example, and announced plans in January 2012 to offer a subscription iPad app that would offer expanded content. And American Media is just one of those to try to sate the public's appetite for celebrity journalism. Among the most mainstream of mainstream media companies, Time Warner's celebrity-gossip website TMZ.com attracts nearly 20 million visitors each month. (Others in this category include such sites as PerezHilton.com, Gawker.com and RadarOnline.com. There's even a website—www.gossipcop.com—that fact checks stories in the tabloids and reports its own celebrity news.) Meanwhile, Time Warner's most profitable magazine these days is not *Time* or *Sports Illustrated* but *People*.

That economics will continue to fuel the proliferation of other publications, television shows and, especially, blogs chasing the latest celebrity news seems inescapable.

University of Kansas Jacqueline Thomas

BEN SHAHN'S AMERICAN SCENE: Photographs, 1938. By John Raeburn. Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press. 2010.

Raeburn continues his research on 1930's American photography with his new book, covering Shahn's work on small town America with the Farm Security Administration's Historical Section. Although Shahn's assignment from director Roy Stryker had originally been the "harvest in Ohio," Shahn's photographs of small town life grew to represent the largest portion of images. Loosely based on Stryker's guidelines for what to photograph in order to document the "average American" in the face of fascist threats overseas, Shahn delivers views which are occasionally poignant—but most often quotidian—at least compared to some of his more famous Depression-era images which immediately spring to mind; therefore, it is quite helpful to have Raeburn as a guide.

The book is organized thematically with chapters devoted to the main street, sidewalks, modernity, the poor, and race, although the chapters are certainly interconnected by recurring motifs: people gathered to chat on the streets, vernacular shop windows and signs, and cars parked on small town streets, for example. The town

squares of Shahn's images are unexceptional-looking, which Raeburn reports is part of Shahn's compositional strategy to emphasize "the built environment's banality and imply the town's enervation" (50). In Shahn's view, the small town, despite the arrival of the automobile, had entered a "period of decline" represented in its "disused public spaces" (2); one certainly feels that quality in many of the images. Raeburn also argues that Shahn, following the intelligentsia's assumption (and Stryker's shooting script) that "small towns were a bedrock of stable tradition" (132), avoided images of modernity's encroachments (new car dealers, chain department stores, and ubiquitous movie theaters).

Shahn himself seems to have deliberately avoided photographing certain public institutions, like schools and libraries, in favor of groups on the street, in part, Raeburn argues, because citizens' interactions with each other were more indicative of small town America in the photographer's opinion. Shahn shot using a 35-mm Leica equipped with a right-angle viewfinder, meaning that he could photograph people surreptitiously. Raeburn points out that one can even see the photographer's reflection in the plate glass windows! For that reason, I wish that Raeburn had commented more directly on whether he thought that the right-angle viewfinder was in use for the shantytown pictures (no plate glass here to reflect the photographer), as these images most strongly recall the more familiar images. In contrast, the author argues quite strongly that the tricky viewfinder was *not* in use for the mesmerizing picture of the itinerant African-American tintypist—one of the strongest in Shahn's series. Both Shahn and Raeburn excel in addressing controversial issues of race and class which were not specifically on Stryker's shooting script but were clearly on Shahn's mind.

My regret for the book lies with the images; although there are a hundred, the reproductions are quite middle grey and not keyed to Library of Congress locator numbers; however, Raeburn's book will certainly assist many, as these images do not reveal themselves quickly nor easily.

Iowa State University Emily Godbey

BEYOND PRESERVATION: Using Public History to Revitalize Inner Cities. By Andrew Hurley. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 2010.

In *Beyond Preservation*, Andrew Hurley makes the case that public history and public archaeology have untapped potential to revitalize urban neighborhoods. To counteract the tendency of traditional historic preservation strategies to destabilize existing inner-city populations, Hurley advances an alternative grass-roots public history model based on his own involvement in community-university partnerships in St. Louis. This model is designed to draw the participation of a wider cross-section of residents in planning processes that use history to attract investment, establish neighborhood identity, and stabilize population.

Hurley provides a comprehensive background for his critique of historic preservation's limitations. In the years after World War II, preservation emerged as an attractive alternative to urban renewal. As an urban revitalization strategy, historic preservation

often proved successful, but Hurley contends that an increasing propensity to frame this success in terms of rising property values displaced lower income residents. Furthermore, historic preservation has the tendency to freeze historical focus on the illustrious beginnings of neighborhoods, effacing long periods of community history from view. Hurley contrasts these exclusivist tendencies with the democratic trends within the historical profession that spurred the birth of public history, an effort to give voice to disenfranchised populations and created a "shared authority" between professionals and the public.

The core of *Beyond Preservation* centers on case studies that attempt to meld the best of these two worlds. In three separate projects, academics from Community History Research and Design Services (CHRDS) (affiliated with the University of Missouri-St. Louis) collaborated with neighborhood activists in North St. Louis neighborhoods who hoped to use historic preservation to attract investment and new homeowners without displacing current residents. Project leaders encouraged community members to view the built environment as a complex accretion of layers of social and cultural history. Tools such as oral history and public archaeology allowed residents to craft historical narratives that supported the neighborhood identity they hoped to cultivate in the future. Through these narratives, residents were able to take ownership of the community planning process.

While widespread citizen engagement and consensus are at the heart of Hurley's vision for public history projects, he acknowledges the practical difficulties of drawing non-traditional stakeholders into the research and planning process. Hurley is honest about both the about successes and shortcomings of the St. Louis projects, and the latter chapters of the book are devoted to the challenges and opportunities faced in such efforts: getting the community behind public-history projects, integrating the natural environment into preservation efforts, and efforts to bridge the gap between community and university participants.

Beyond Preservation has a clear precedent in Dolores Hayden's seminal book *The Power of Place,* based on Hayden's own public history projects in Los Angeles in the 1990's. The prose is clear and well-organized, and Hurley provides a wealth of examples of projects that have attempted to make history a dynamic and effective tool for planning and redevelopment, including not only The Power of Place, but Place Matters in New York City, Archaeology in Annapolis, the Historic Savannah Foundation, and host of others across the United States.

The first two chapters—a primer on the historic preservation movement and the development of public history—would make excellent reading in public history or preservation classes. Because of its emphasis on practical application, the book also reaches out the educated layperson. Importantly, Hurley devotes a section of the book to addressing the crucial conundrum of preservation without displacement, providing concrete strategies, steps of action, and examples of successful programs that have facilitated the maintenance of diverse populations in historic neighborhoods.

Though Hurley's critique of historic preservation efforts as "history for profit" has some validity, he overstates the point when he claims that historic neighborhoods have failed to create communities. Furthermore, in many cases—some of which

he cites—small groups of activists have employed historic preservation as a tool to save their neighborhood from imminent threat of wholesale destruction. In such situations, wide community engagement and consensus are noble intentions, but not always practicable. Hurley's own experience working with non-traditional stakeholders seems to substantiate this point; though he makes a point of maintaining the agency and independence of grass-roots community committees, the reader senses that committees make the "right" answers when guided by their academic partners, and the "wrong" answers when not.

These observations do nothing to detract from the fact that this is a first-rate book that puts theories into action in the service of preserving and interpreting the cultural landscapes of urban neighborhoods. In addition to the catalog of practical models it provides, *Beyond Preservation* is grounded in a wider academic literature on preservation, public history, and the built environment, as well as a long-running stream of books that argue for more public engagement in the creation of history. It contributes to a nascent—and much needed—dialogue between practitioners of historic preservation, public history, public archaeology, and urban history. *Beyond Preservation* is a valuable addition to the literature, whether as a provocative starting point for discussion or as a practical road map for community activism.

Independent Scholar Elizabeth Hoffman Ransford

BLACK VENUS 2010: They Called Her "Hottentot." Edited by Deborah Willis. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 2010.

In this collection of scholarly essays, poetry, visual art, and reflective prose, Deborah Willis has compiled a truly interdisciplinary analysis of the life and image of Sarah Baartman, the so-called "Hottentot Venus." Born in South Africa in 1789, Baartman became one of the most infamous examples of the European obsession with black women's bodies when she was placed on display (often in a cage while wearing a flesh-colored bodysuit) in London in 1810 and in Paris. Although Baartman was not the only black woman to be exhibited in such brutal fashion, she has become one of the most notorious examples of nineteenth-century theories of racial difference. Because scholarly discussions of the racial politics that turned Baartman's body into a spectacle sometimes fail to address the psychological and spiritual horror of Baartman's experience fully, Willis's inclusion of poetry and visual art provides an added metaphysical dimension that complements the scholarly articles in this book. *Black Venus 2010* is divided into four parts. The first situates Sarah Baartman in the context of nineteenth-century theories of race, ethnicity, and gender. The second explores Baartman's legacy in visual art and art history. The third centers on Baartman as a public spectacle, while the fourth discusses the image of black women in popular culture and the entertainment industry throughout the twentieth century.

Following a prologue in verse by Elizabeth Alexander, this anthology opens with a slightly revised version of Sander Gilman's classic essay "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature," here retitled "The Hottentot and the Prostitute." Al-

though much scholarship on Baartman by critical race theorists and feminist scholars (such as T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting's *Black Venus,* 1999) has been published since Gilman's study, it remains a foundational text, and this anthology built upon it. Essays by sociologist Zine Magubani and literary critic Carol Boyce Davies illustrate this point. Zine Magubani's "Which Bodies Matter?" suggests that contemporary scholars anachronistically and incorrectly ascribe modern ideas of "blackness" to Baartman, not realizing that her status as a Khoikhoi set her apart from other Africans. Magubani dispels the assumption that "Baartman's color and sexual difference not only marked her as 'different' but also rendered her fundamentally *the same as* all other 'black' people" and that "what constitutes 'Africanity' and 'blackness' have remained relatively unchanged over time" (52). In contrast, Carol Boyce Davies's "Black/Female/Bodies Carnivalized" explores the enduring significance of Baartman's life and image through her discussion of present-day carnival and dancehall culture in the Caribbean. She analyzes the popular butterfly dance as an example of black women boldly claiming public space as they express a sense of power and pleasure through dance, which presents a stark contrast to the vulnerable position of Baartman standing still, naked, and mute on a platform to entertain white voyeurs.

This anthology is unified by its authors' revisionist, theoretical approach to understanding the life and image of Sarah Baartman. While the interdisciplinary format expands our understanding of Baartman's life and legacy, future scholarship should include deeper analysis of Baartman's image in relation to American popular culture, especially in the realms of film, television, and video. For example, how might the celebration of a white American beauty icon such as Marilyn Monroe, who was praised, paid, *and* objectified for her voluptuous physique throughout the 1950s, compare to Baartman's life? How might current-day celebrations of well-endowed black and Latina celebrities such as tennis champion Serena Williams, hip-hop video icon Buffie the Body, and music/film stars Jennifer Lopez and Beyoncé Knowles compare to Baartman's experience? Although these celebrities certainly exercise a much higher level of authority over their bodies, their images still take on a life of their own—providing yet another source of entertainment for latter-day voyeurs. Further study of Baartman placed in proper historical context and in conversation with current-day media and popular culture would provide us with more nuanced understandings of how the meanings of race and gender have changed from the nineteenth century to the present.

Miami University of Ohio, Oxford Tammy L. Brown

BRING ON THE BOOKS FOR EVERYBODY: How Literary Culture Became Popular Culture. By Jim Collins. Durham: Duke University Press. 2010.

An alternate subtitle for Jim Collins' *Bring on the Books for Everybody*—less concise, but perhaps more accurate—might be "How Literary Culture Has Been Affected by the Same Market Forces that Every Other Aspect of Consumer Culture Has Been Affected by."

In this engaging study of how literary reading has been incorporated into visual and electronic media, Collins considers how, through pervasive consumerism, an impulse toward self-improvement, and a widespread desire to use literature (like virtually all other purchases) as a lifestyle signifier, the formerly solitary activity has been reborn as a social expression of value and taste.

Collins examines how books are consumed, concluding that "the love of literature can now be fully experienced only outside the academy and the New York literary scene" (3), and observing that "The most profound change in literary America after the rise of postmodern fiction [. . .] was the complete redefinition of what literary reading means within the heart of electronic culture." He analyzes online book retailers, chain superstores, literary adaptation films and Oprah's Book Club, delivering rich case studies of how such relatively new institutions—which affect how books are distributed and valued—have profoundly altered when and where "literary" experience takes place.

Readers seeking arguments about these developments may be disappointed. Collins' stated aim is to remain in the realm of the descriptive, and he adheres to this objective almost without fail. In his introduction, he explains: "My goal in this book is to trace the contours of a particular 'media ecology' shaped by the increasing convergence of literary, visual and material cultures" (8); although he expresses hope that it will not, the account sometimes comes across as detachedly observational.

Mostly, though, Collins' writing is personable and accessible, and he draws on his expertise as a professor in the Department of Film, Television and Theatre at the University of Notre Dame to maintain appropriate ambivalence and to avoid speciously pitting various media against one another in a zero-sum game. For instance, he does good service to his subject by permitting himself to argue that notions like those espoused in the NEA's 2004 report *Reading at Risk*—which asserted "that reading books and viewing electronic media are mutually antagonistic experiences"—are "troubling" conclusions based on a "highly debatable interpretation of data" (14).

Collins is best when most argumentative, as when, in the final chapter, he critiques "the relationship between the type of beauty offered by reading literary fiction and other sorts of aesthetic beauty, specifically those offered by material culture" (226). Here he notes that "Literary critics have theorized about the pleasure of the text for the past three decades," and "In much the same way, the pleasures furnished by material objects have also been theorized [. . .] by sociologists eager to identify the underlying desires that animate consumer culture," and concludes that "I know of no attempt to situate the two in reference to each other" (226).

Though critical at times of "the academy," Collins comes across as a passionate teacher, often invoking student reactions in his analyses, and the book seems to reflect his commitment to fostering discussion; because it refuses—sometimes frustratingly, other times wisely—to offer a unified argument, Collins' project stands as an invitation for readers to draw their own conclusions based on a wealth of curated evidence.

DePaul University Kathleen Rooney

BUILDING A HOUSEWIFE'S PARADISE: Gender, Politics, and American Grocery Stores in the Twentieth Century. By Tracey Deutsch. University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

The supermarket emerged as a dominant symbol of post-World War II abundance and prosperity in American consumer society. The dominance of the supermarket has usually been explained as a result of business innovation and consumer demand. Tracey Deutsch persuasively complicates this interpretation, showing that the supermarket must be understood as the product of government policy and the actions of women as much as it was the invention of experimental entrepreneurs. Deutsch argues that "the supermarket, that icon of postwar American life, emerged not from a straightforward attempt to satisfy consumer demand but through retailers' sometimes contradictory efforts to administer government regulations, achieve financial success, and control the shop floor and also through women customers' negotiation of budgets, familial needs, ethnic loyalties, political desires, and ideologies of domesticity" (6). In contrast to twentieth-century consumer histories often told from a national perspective, Deutsch takes a case study approach focused on neighborhood groceries and chain stores in Chicago from about 1910 through the 1960s. This allows her to consider not only the history of larger firms but also the local conditions and variety of consumer choices in Chicago for procuring food including small family stores, large national chains, and consumer cooperatives. Told from a national perspective, the rise of the supermarket appears to be a relatively clear cut narrative of standardization and centralization. Experienced from the local perspective, the failures and successes of standardization become clearer as firms sought to impose new retailing strategies in everyday life. This case study approach makes it possible to consider a wide range of sources including manuscript materials documenting consumer organization activities, federal census records, local government records for Chicago, oral histories, popular consumer magazines, and corporate records.

It is not possible to understand the history of the supermarket without considering gender. According to Deutsch, "the question of women's authority was inseparable from the question of how food would be sold" (3). Deutsch explores the rise of consumer activism in the economic crises of the Great Depression and food rationing during World War II. The growth of an organized consumer movement highlighted concerns about the authority of women consumers. The 1930s and 1940s in particular marked a critical period of reinventing supermarkets based on a conservative model of middle class femininity in spite of the fact that the prevailing rhetoric asserted women's preference for the new supermarket environment of clean, well-lit, orderly stores. "Large, centrally managed chain store firms and the supermarkets that they operated proved best able to enforce rationing and price controls because their structure effectively prevented women customers from demanding personal exceptions to store policy" (8). Thus Deutsch forges important connections between consumer history and politics broadly defined to include government policy and social relations in the local community. Her carefully crafted interpretation documents the role of government policy—especially sales tax, relief policies during the depression, and

rationing during WWII—for creating conditions that privileged chain stores and supermarkets over the small mom and pop retailer.

Deutsch convincingly shows how the creation of the supermarket was a highly contingent, negotiated, social and political process; not inevitable and not easily explained as a result of consumer demand or consumer satisfaction. Written in an engaging style accessible to students, *Building a Housewife's Paradise* makes essential contributions to consumer history, business history, and women's history.

University of North Carolina, Greensboro Lisa C. Tolbert

CHAMPAGNE CHARLIE & PRETTY JEMIMA: Variety Theater in the Nineteenth Century. By Gillian M. Rodger. Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press. 2010.

Since at least the publication of Robert W. Snyder's *The Voice of the City* in 1989, vaudeville theater has become ripe ground for historical investigation. A number of books, including M. Alison Kibler's *Rank Ladies,* Donald Travis Stewart's (aka *Trav S.D.*) *No Applause—Just Throw Money*, my *Blue Vaudeville*, and others have explored the acts, audiences, and cultural meanings of this once-hugely popular form of amusement. What has been pretty much ignored, however, is the life of vaudeville's chief ancestor, the raunchier, more (allegedly) lowbrow *variety theater*. Now Gillian M. Rodger has produced a clearly written and well-researched book that is wide enough in scope to be considered an indispensable source on the subject.

Champagne Charlie & Pretty Jemima: Variety Theater in the Nineteenth Century takes the reader from the raucous, early days of variety's birth in the 1840s through various iterations which flourished during and after the American Civil War, up to the rise of big-time vaudeville in the 1890s. In particular, Rodger is concerned with the social role variety played as it catered to largely working-class audiences who "went to the variety hall to see themselves represented" (194) and to address their "shared concerns and sympathies" (6). Accordingly, the author views ethnic stereotype acts, notably Irish and German, as well as other specialties, as having significance for class cohesion, values, and differentiation from the more well-heeled social strata. Early chapters focus on the rise of "free and easies" (13), or singing entertainment nights put on by bar owners like William Hitchcock which led to the development of nascent variety. The narrative here proceeds to the early 1860s when legislative efforts barred alcohol and staged entertainment from the same room, thus more precisely giving rise to a variety *theater* that would gain a huge following and eventually morph into vaudeville.

Rodger focuses a great deal of her writing on contributions by women in variety, such as Jennie Engel and other "seriocomics" (88) who led audiences armed with "songster" (92) sheets in sing-alongs; Annie Hindle who impersonated men onstage in the 1870s as she poked fun at "swells" and "dudes"(137)—overdressed, over-refined, upper-class males who were anything but manly (the song "Champagne Charlie" was about such an individual); and May Fisk who launched a "female minstrel" (159) troupe that catered to leering working-class men in the "sexualized variety" (71) of

late 1870s which drew the ire of moral reformers in towns across the Midwest. In fact, one of the book's strengths is its attention to variety in the "periphery" (156) outside New York, where source material permits.

The prose is quite readable, though occasionally the editing feels sloppy or draggy. As a musicologist, Rodger sometimes dips into technical terms—"contrafacta" and "conjunct" are two examples—that may be off-putting to the less-trained. But these few peccadillos are easily forgivable in the context of a book that so capably traverses a swath of popular culture which for too long has been talked about but rarely explored.

Independent scholar Andrew L. Erdman

DROPPERS: America's First Hippie Commune, Drop City. By Mark Matthews. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 2010.

This book does not begin with the quote, "All that is solid, melts into air," (Karl Marx—C.M. Communist Manifesto) but perhaps it should. Art, activism and invention are at the core of this story, and the result is a beguiling tale of ingenuity, celebration of life and ultimately a heartbreaking collapse of utopia.

The text for this book is largely derived from interviews with the Drop City founding member, Eugene Victor Debs Bernofsky, but also includes correspondence with other founding members Clark Richert and Richard Kallweit. It is clear through the reading that the author has gone to great lengths to secure the poignant and engrossing chronicles. The first few chapters of the book give an illustrative vision of the years leading up to the great journey that would be, Drop City, beginning with Bernofsky's "red diaper" years in New York City. The narrative interview format is peppered with insightful and solid historic bits and illuminating tangential fragments from the period.

Gene Bernofsky's friend and fellow University of Kansas student Clark Richert coaxed him into making art. The two of them formed an alliance and called their creations *Droppings*, and themselves *Droppers*. The term *Droppers* precisely relates to several art happenings in which they dropped or hung by ropes objects and works of art from their loft window in downtown Lawrence, Kansas. Gene said of their artmaking, "We decided that, if we were going to make things, we wouldn't copy anything." This tenet lead to explicit innovation and is reiterated throughout the apologue as they continually reinvent the world they live in.

Matthews does a remarkable job of infusing the book with historic context from the period and dotting the chapters with enough political sampling to transport the reader to a time when radical change seemed to be the only real possibility. Much of Bernofsky's comments are fact checked by his FBI file, providing an interested subtext to the whole book. Matthews also wittily interjects snippets of period news blurbs into the text, somewhat like the beat cut-ups of Brion Gysin and William S. Burroughs, it makes for an interesting read. The casual and creative format of the book flows wonderfully and in some ways reveals deeper views of an un-intentional community than a more traditional historic take.

We follow a trance-like story of profoundly radical and freethinkers as they reel through Marxist leanings, Mennonite resistance, art making and straight up Bucky Fuller cosmic energy to get them to a laudable point of departure, to a point of no return and a place of no blueprint. What is spilled out in this book is perhaps the only true narrative of Drop City, so far anyway – the facts and myth continue to be overturned. Mark Matthews does justice to the subject and with respect pays tribute to a radiate flare in American history that made triumphant contributions to art, communal living, experimental architecture, alternative energy models and what became known as the hippie movement.

University of Kansas Michael Krueger

FIGHT FOR YOUR LONG DAY. By Alex Kudera. Atticus Books, Kensington, MD. 2010.

While Alex Kudera's novel, *Fight for Your Long Day*, highlights the grave socio-economic injustices of a corrupt academic system, it is much more than a preachy manifesto. Cyrus Duffelman's struggles are that of any of the economically repressed. But when college professors earn Wal-mart wages, it highlights a shocking disconnect between the hollow political rhetoric of the importance of education and the true reality. Cyrus inhabits a world of increasing impoverishment. This is the landscape of essayist and cultural critic Barbara Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed*.

It would be a cliché to call him a modern day Everyman. Cyrus is a real person with frailties, insecurities, yet with conviction and seriousness about what he does. He does represent a growing class of academic paupers in particular and the growing dominance of menial wages everywhere in America in general whether the work is menial or not. And, yet, it's not little enough. Menial wages, that is. Another sad irony is that the adjunct is no lifetime indentured servant, but rather an endangered species as institutions of higher learning contemplate "satellite hookups and TVs in every classroom . . . with the finest Indian universities teaching virtual classes long-distance . . . The fifteen grand a year they were paying the graduate student [or adjunct] has become fifteen hundred for a hungrier South Asian" (207-208).

Cyrus is doubly invisible. No one "sees" him—just as the adjunct inequity is on almost no one's radar—and because Cyrus wields no power or status, he hopes not to be seen. He continues on not in hope of reward or changing the system, but in adherence to his own personal code of conduct, and he is his own harshest critic.

Professor Kudera's social criticism emerges from Cyrus's quality of life conditions. Between classes, he kills time sitting in a train station, passing for one of the homeless ensconced there. Cyrus alternates between "ogling the ripe melons" of student Allison Silverman while anticipating a late-night tryst with said melons and contemplating Jewish writers in the 1920s who could smell Hitler and Stalin in the air. Cyrus knows enough to ask what kind of smell is in the air now? In our current educational environment, knowledge isn't important; it may even be a rotting corpse which is perhaps what Cyrus smells. Despite his external invisibility, his inner hamster

wheel is always turning. The time-worn expression "life of the mind" becomes the "life of the grind."

So, ultimately, Cyrus's fight is for his own standards and integrity in the face of humiliation and futility, a daily quest for survival and the strength to endure. In our "anti-progressive" age, Cyrus is emblematic of a devolving system: the itinerant medieval scholar traveling from one fiefdom to the next in tatters, hoping for a meal or bauble.

If only adjuncts read this book, they would nod and commiserate; as a work of fiction, strongly rooted in social criticism, the general public needs in on it, for one, the parents paying skyrocketing tuition costs, because they should know where the money is going. And it is certainly not in the pockets of the Cyrus Duffelmans of academia.

Palm Beach State College Joseph A. Domino

HERETICAL FICTIONS: Religion in the Literature of Mark Twain. By Lawrence I. Berkove and Joseph Csicsila. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press. 2010.

This book argues that Mark Twain remained preoccupied with the notion of predetermination throughout his life, even as he broke from Calvinism, dabbled in deism, and explored scientific philosophies. It suggests that Twain's satires were more ambitious than previously supposed—in addition to critiquing the lack of free will in small towns or corrupt political arenas, *Heretical Fictions* imagines Twain as a consistent and sophisticated "critic of God" (xv). Contending that Twain satirized the state of human existence as well as the hypocritical preaching thereof, this study posits religious imagery as "a key to [Twain's] main themes . . . that enables us to reliably identify and better understand his work at all stages of his career" (13).

The warrant for this project involves the place of Mark Twain in the literary canon. In that sense, *Heretical Fictions* resonates with an older tradition in American literary scholarship which has been associated with the cult of authorial celebrity. It argues that, "There is no other author in all of world literature whom we call great even though he or she could not write a book that hung together and continued to gain significance through the end. Why make an exception for Twain? . . . In order to justify the claim that Twain is a great author, a straightforward way has to be found of reading his literature so that thematic consistency and artistic strengths can be seen" (82). While arguing for "thematic consistency," Berkove and Csicsila relish, rather than collapse, the ambiguity and complexity of Twain's writing. The "countertheology" they outline is capacious; they identify it in many different forms, from the "misleading past tense" that pervades Twain's early work through the layered images of dreaming that give his late fiction its otherworldly and tenebrous tone (33).

Through the lens of countertheology, *Heretical Fictions* carefully reflects on questions which have been central to Twain scholarship for decades, including ostensible incongruities within and among his fictions. Of particular interest are its treatment of *Roughing It, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* and *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger.* Closely attending to Twain's syntax and his proclivity for hoaxing his

readers by manipulating their romantic expectations, Berkove and Csicsila argue that Twain slips between earthly and spiritual notions of "free will" in these major works. By considering how each deals with freedom in a broad theological sense, the authors contend that these texts are more coherent than previously supposed.

By organizing each chapter around a major work of fiction—including, *Roughing It*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger,* and the Letters from the Earth—the authors develop an accumulative sense of how Twain's religious thinking operates and how it inflects his evolving craft. Each chapter of *Heretical Fictions* puts Mark Twain in conversation with major writers of his day, from Artemus Ward and George Washington Cable through Walt Whitman and William James. Far more than a narrow account of religious allusions, this study offers ambitious new readings of Mark Twain's major works to argue that his literary genius was more consistent and daring than less-unified interpretations of his fictions have allowed.

Cornell University Jennifer Leigh Lieberman

THE IMPROBABLE FIRST CENTURY OF COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE. By James Landers. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press. 2010.

James Landers' intriguing volume offers a thorough and thoroughly enjoyable account of a family literary magazine that underwent several distinctive incarnations yet was always near the center of important cultural events. *Cosmopolitan* began in 1886 during a mania of magazine-making and survived bankruptcy just three years later by being rescued by entrepreneur John Brisben Walker. As Landers astutely recognizes, Walker is a significant figure in the annals of magazine editing. He brought to the magazine a unique blend of flair and progressivism. On one hand, he resorted to sensationalist ploys such as publishing dispatches of his associate editor Elizabeth Bisland as she embarked on a seventy-six day trip around the world in a race against Nellie Bly of the *New York World*. He also vigorously advocated for the eight-hour workday, defended strikers of every stripe, called for an income tax on the wealthy, commissioned articles that sought to alleviate racial tensions and urban poverty, and founded Cosmopolitan University, a free correspondence school open to all. In 1891, he brought in the eminent William Dean Howells to co-edit the magazine, an arrangement that lasted all of two months as Howells recoiled from Walker's oversight and his insistence that he begin *his* eight-hour workday at 8 a.m. Under Walker's helm, *Cosmopolitan* also published H.G. Wells' celebrated *War of the Worlds* and began serialization of Tolstoy's *The Awakening*, which was discontinued after the author stopped sending installments due to Walker's bowdlerization of it.

In 1905, the magazine was bought by William Randolph Hearst, who essentially used it as a platform to further his personal political pursuits. A Democratic congressman with ambitions to become P resident at the time, Hearst sought support from the working and middle classes by publishing muckraking pieces that exposed the abuse of wealth in the Senate ("The Treason of the Senate"), the power of cartel families ("Owners of America"), municipal corruption ("What Are You Going to Do

About It?"), and other abuses. When Hearst's political interests folded in 1912, he brought in Ray Long as editor who successfully made the magazine fiction heavy. Long published leading writers of the Jazz Age including Theodore Dreiser, Edna Ferber, Ring Lardner, Sinclair Lewis, W. Somerset Maugham, Damon Runyon, and P.G. Wodehouse, among others. Preferring material that he viewed as suitable for affluent middle-class readers, Long, however, refused to publish Ernest Hemingway and notoriously rejected F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby.*

Cosmopolitan lost its vitality in the 1940s and 50s. By the mid-1960s, the magazine was all but dead when the bold and energetic Helen Gurley Brown took over as editor, a remarkable reign that lasted until 1996. Brown radically revamped the magazine, eventually making it a must read for millions of young women, who came to look forward to its topically relevant pages and proto-feminist positions. A moderate rather than a radical feminist, Brown published articles that sought to help women gain confidence, make money, and be independent. Her pioneering efforts remade *Cosmopolitan* into the centerpiece of the Hearst Corporation empire, even as her feminist vision for the magazine is now all but lost. In its present-day incarnation, *Cosmopolitan* is just another glossy fashion woman's magazine, designed to sell copies and products rather than to educate and challenge its readers.

In examining the efforts of Walker, Hearst, and Brown to create a magazine that both reflected their personal interests and sought a wide array of new readers, Landers opens up windows in time that have been missed in traditional literary analyses. At the same time, the author could have allotted more space discussing the effects of writing for this particular magazine by, say, the notoriously anti-commercial author Theodore Dreiser or the prolific W. Somerset Maugham, who himself discusses the influence of writing for this magazine in a preface to his collected pieces called *Cosmopolitans*. Such minor quibbles aside, Landers' book does an exquisite job conveying the important role editors and publishers played in manufacturing readers and genres and the influence they had on key political issues and cultural movements.

New York City College of Technology (CUNY) Mark Noonan

MEMORIAL MANIA: Public Feeling in America. By Erika Doss. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2010.

In *Memorial Mania*, an encompassing survey of modern memorializing in the United States, Erika Doss wonders why contemporary Americans create memorials, and why so many of them. Doss contends that the spur toward the modern proliferation of memorials can be explained by "memorial mania," an obsession with memory and history that promotes an urgent need to claim these issues in visible, public ways.

For Doss, what distinguishes modern memorial making from past impulses toward memorializing is the elevated place of emotion in contemporary American society: memorials become "archives of public affect . . . repositories of feeling and emotion" (13). The structure of the book is therefore governed by different affective themes; chapters focus on grief, which centers on memorials to the Columbine tragedy and other temporary memorials, including roadside shrines and teddy bear piles; fear,

looking at the proliferation of terrorism memorials, both before and after 9/11; and gratitude, which centers on the hulking and graceless World War II memorial on the Mall in Washingon D.C. The last two chapters examine newer types of memorials that are inspired by the affective states of shame and anger. Lynching memorials occupy the bulk of her analysis of shame, while the chapter on anger focuses on memorials that express contestations of American identity, particularly in the case of Native American historical revisionism.

For Doss, the current desire to create memorials in the United States is motivated by continuing struggles over identity and political representation in an increasingly divided nation. She sees a shift from past memorials that embodied unified narratives of a celebratory, masculine national history to a more fragmented memorial landscape that commemorates individual memories or personal grievances, tragedy and trauma, and the social and political agendas of interest groups made up of "rights bearing citizens." As Doss portrays it, the frenzy to memorialize is driven by anxiety over the division and claiming of rights in an increasingly individualized public sphere. Public art becomes an arena of struggle over cultural, social, and economic authority. The argument that memorials and monuments express contests over authority is not new, but Doss calls upon an impressive range of sources to assemble an exhaustive catalog of modern memorials. She provides detailed and sometimes eye-opening descriptions of both the cultural and political processes that bring memorials into existence, and supplements this discussion with ample photographic illustration. In interpreting the meaning of memorials, Doss draws from a wide array of theoretical models, most notably models that consider emotion and public feeling.

While the consideration of emotion raises intriguing paths for inquiry, Doss is at her most successful in showcasing the political and cultural influences that shape modern memorial making. The "key tropes of modern cultural consciousness" that she identifies in modern memorials—irony, contradiction and conflict, victims as heroes—also dominate mass media and entertainment culture; in this sense, modern memorials are inextricable from the media narratives that breed them. Such impulses are most evident in her discussion of memorials at Columbine and the World Trade Center. Furthermore, by stressing the centrality of "rights" speech and demands for respect that are often articulated in the memorial process, Doss calls attention to the increasing importance of the individual and of individual rights in contemporary rhetoric about the body politic—a far cry from the assumptions of unified national purpose that motivated memorials in the nineteenth century.

Doss's comprehensive narrative of the evolution of memorial and monument making helps situate her current examples in a historical context. The analysis of the post-World War II frustration with figurative monuments is particularly fascinating; post-war feelings about the futility of the image in the wake of unimaginable catastrophe help explain the hiatus in formal memorial building that occurred in the 1950's, when the great majority of war memorials were "living" memorials: parks, highways, stadiums. In the end, however, Doss's thoroughness in tracing the genesis of the trends she reviews has the tendency to undercut her contentions about the unique nature of modern memorializing. Instead, the current mania for memorial-

izing seems to be a continuation of a deeper impulse that has long been at work in American culture—guided by new tropes, but essentially the same.

Memorial Mania is valuable in that it invites a new and critical look at the memorial landscape. However, the polemical nature of the prose and the political agenda that motivates the arguments can be more distracting than enlightening. With the exception of memorials motivated by shame or anger, Doss's criticisms of memorials are unremitting. As a result, *Memorial Mania* raises any number of provocative questions, but is less adept at providing practical, workable answers or explaining why these answers matter.

Still, the questions Doss raises about American culture—particularly the manic nature of its affective expressions—are worth consideration. *Memorial Mania* fills a hole in scholarship by tying together the studies of physical space, cultural theory, national identity and emotion. Overall, it is worthwhile contribution to the literature, and Doss's critiques are a good starting point for future analysis.

Independent Scholar Elizabeth Hoffman Ransford

OTHERNESS IN HOLLYWOOD CINEMA. By Michael Richardson. New York and London: Continuum. 2010.

Richardson, who has published quite widely on the writings of Georges Bataille and surrealism, presents an overview and analysis of the "other" as depicted in American cinema from Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) to the present. As such, the book is ambitious in scope, both in addressing a wide time span and in the varied typologies of "others" examined. For example, Richardson takes on "nature as other," Native Americans, Asians (Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese), ethnographic spectacles, zombies, and the femme fatale in noir—as well as numerous additional examples of "others" which have merited monographs of their own.

The book opens with a meditation on the status of the Hollywood system, founded with a sense of exile by its largely Jewish founders. The author also addresses the problem of defining the abstraction of the "other" against the self. Although there might be said to be a rough overarching chronological timeline, with emphasis on films from the 1920's and 1930's in the first part of the book, the 1940's and 1950's in the middle, and in the last, contemporary cinema, most chapters are also organized thematically. However, there are anomalies to this system of organization; *Apocalypse Now* is given its own chapter, while Steven Spielberg and Jim Jarmusch have auteur-based chapters (although their films are also incorporated elsewhere). The final chapter is devoted to *King Kong*, as Richardson considers it a summation of the nature/culture and primitive/modern themes in American film, at least in the 1933 version, if not in the poor 1976 or 2005 remakes. Since the book has covered such a large array of others in the previous pages, perhaps not all readers will agree that Kong is the "epitome of otherness" (224), however.

The book was strongest in the analysis of Asian cultures in American film, perhaps because that theme is interwoven throughout so many chapters, whereas some other motifs are not picked up again as often or directly. However, I was at

times unsure about who "we viewers" were in the book, as the preface describes how American cinema presents itself to the outside world; however, it seemed that the implied viewer of "we" was often a generic American viewer. In contrast, I particularly appreciated the portions of the book that covered reception at the time of the original release (Fu Manchu films), among groups outside the United States (the Chinese government's opposition to *Kundun*), or with a specific American sub-group (an Asian-American watchdog groups' opinions), for example. The author's working definition of "Hollywood" in the title remains a bit ambiguous. The Hollywood studio system of the early years is clear, but that definition becomes more muddled with contemporary cinema—especially with the inclusion of the chapter on Jarmusch who is described as being an "other" to Hollywood in terms of sensibility, control, and distribution (192). Nonetheless, with twelve distinct chapters with some clear screening options, I could see this book working quite well for a film class on the same topic.

Iowa State University Emily Godbey

SEGREGATING SOUND: Inventing Folk and Pop Music in the Age of Jim Crow. By Karl Hagstrom Miller. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 2010.

"African American musicians left a remarkable and rich musical legacy on race records, but their recorded blues did not begin to chronicle the diverse and complex body of music with which they had forged their earlier careers as live musicians. White southern artists faced a different challenge. They had to paint the pop tunes they loved with a patina of down-home credibility" (227).

Isolation, naturalness, authenticity: in this thorough study, Miller argues that these ideas, among others, were used to narrate and to set into fact a false image of the musical lives of Southerners in the US at the turn of the 20th century. Situating his work firmly within the bounds of popular music in that epoch, Miller delivers a challenging exploration of the intertwined histories of non-commercial and commercialized musical cultures, showing that "southern musicians performed a staggering variety of music in the early twentieth century" (1). With pointed questions—did "chroniclers of southern music dismiss commercial pop as immaterial to southern culture"(7); did folklorists and the academy establish a musical color line in the beginning of the 20th century; did the commercial recording industry enforce marketing techniques to control what types of music musicians played and what types audiences heard; did these pressures come together in the early 20th century to redefine musical tastes as we know and experience them today?—Miller examines the forces that influenced the identities and perceptions of these musicians and their audiences, including the politics of segregation and emerging academic folklore as well as the commercial imperatives of the music industry. Accentuating comparisons of similarity rather than difference, Miller draws on the perspectives and repertoires of working musicians, narratives of record label agents and the catalogs they represented, and the discourse of nascent folklorists.

Proceeding from the premise that "people's music worlds were less defined by who they were than by what music they had the opportunity to hear" (7), Miller puts the shared music of white and black Americans at the center of this study, using as his focus the shifting struggles over drawing a color line through this shared space, even if he falls short of deconstructing the "black" and "white" classifications themselves. His early chapters explore the southern embrace of commercial music, especially Tin Pan Alley's long reach into the South between 1890 and 1910; its relationship to touring shows, sheet music, and the sale of pianos for use in the home; and its effect on listeners, musicians, and popular culture. Miller levies critiques on the influences of the folkloric paradigm on ideas of race and music, accusing scholars and collectors of re-imagining cultures of isolation in a never-was-truly-isolated southern US. "Folk music is a framework placed on an existing, complex musical culture, a model that did little to describe the musical complexity on the ground" (8).

Later chapters illustrate Miller's evidence and explore the rise of Race and Old Time records.

Throughout this study, borrowing from Steven Feld's notion of listening as a "feelingful activity," Miller complicates musical meaning, allowing multiple interpretations, multiple identities to exist in any performance, allowing individuals to embrace and use music often assumed to be outside of their core culture.

This is a provocative study, sure to incite further commentary on the topic.

American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress Bertram Lyons

URBAN BUSH WOMEN: Twenty Years of Working It Out. By Nadine George-Graves. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 2010.

Nadine George-Graves presents a compelling history of the Brooklyn community-based dance troupe Urban Bush Women, founded in 1984 by dancer/choreographer Jawole Willa Joe Zollar. Comprised primarily of African American female dancers, Urban Bush Women are dedicated to developing a repertoire of works that create a "physical rhetoric or corporeal argumentation that attempts to activate audiences to attend to the complexities of daily life in terms of race, gender, spirituality, special relations, political power, aesthetics and community life when we are reluctant to do so" (3). Graves theorizes the Urban Bush Women's choreographic process through her multivalent concept of "working." The author suggests this process of working is "emblematic of how individuals and communities work through social anxieties using layers of performance (3) to imagine notions of self and community empowerment. Healing occurs for the dancers and the audience when "one works the roots, works the body, works the soul, works the tangles out" (4). George-Graves unsettles notions of improvisation's general conflation with, here as superficial spontaneity (here in dance) to offer a reading of improvisational practices as a complex process of knowing produced by the artist's capacity to call and respond to learned techniques, lived experiences and cross-cultural exchanges. The author identifies the use of "narrative, mystical beings, ancestors and supernatural plots to create scenarios for conquering hardships" (xiii) as key components of choreographic knowledge pro-

duction. Her analysis offers dance as theatrical site of community building, healing and self-definition.

George-Graves' fifteen years of ethnographic work "trying to get to know Zollar, members of her company, and their work" (xii) is reflected in rich detailed descriptions of the rehearsal and performance processes of Urban Bush Women. Each of the six chapters tracks a facet of the choreographic experience from development and rehearsal to performance and community engagement. George-Graves' analysis of the Urban Bush Women's works reveals an aesthetic practice that borrows from African, European, and African Diasporic dance forms and Eastern and Western spiritual traditions. These references impact her description of their aesthetic as "technique blends, pedestrianism, strength, breath, pace, emotion, playfulness and energy" (35) that empower Zollar and her dancers to "challenge their audiences to reimagine society and renounce old definitions of black dance, and indeed, black identity" (6).

The detailed rehearsal and performance descriptions informed by original interviews with Urban Bush Women members are particularly rich in Chapter 3, "The Word- Black Magic Realism." Accounts of *Praise House*, a tribute to the late African American folk artist Minnie Evans and *Bones and Ash: A Gilda Story,* a multi-media dance piece inspired by Jewelle Gomez's *The Gilda Stories,* underscores Urban Bush Women's embodied affirmations of the diversity of black women's experiences. The depths of archival research their performances require expand the corporeal discourse of the black body and its intersection with textual narrative, spirituality, voice and community. George-Graves' exploration of the *process* of creating and embodying choreography as site to explore the fluidity of racial identities, specifically blackness, is a significant scholarly intervention that scholars engaged in any aspect of race, gender and performance research would find of interest.

The University of Kansas Nicole Hodges Persley

WANTED WOMEN: An American Obsession in the Reign of J. Edgar Hoover. By Mary Elizabeth Strunk. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas. 2010.
THE FBI AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. By Steve Rosswurm. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 2009.

Steve Rosswurm and Mary Elizabeth Strunk share a common scholarly agenda. Until recent decades, historians and journalists largely depicted former FBI director J. Edgar Hoover as a scourge of American democracy, relying on once-secret Bureau files to reveal the depths of his subterfuge. Rosswurm and Strunk, by contrast, seek to understand Hoover's public influence as a religious moralizer and cultural mythmaker. Following the lead of historians such as Richard Gid Powers and Claire Potter, these two scholars aim less to expose Hoover's FBI than to explore the contradictions of its cultural legacy, especially on the subject of gender.

As journalist Tom Wicker famously noted in the 1970s, Hoover "wielded more power, longer, than any man in American history"—48 years as FBI director. Part of that bureaucratic success, Rosswurm and Strunk suggest, lay in Hoover's ability to

craft a widely recognized public image as a masculine, conservative, law-and-order crusader. Strunk explores this development through the popular media, dissecting film and pulp magazine depictions of female outlaws in the 1930s and 1970s. Rosswurm adopts a more institutional approach, delving into the FBI's internal culture of Catholic conservatism and its external ties to the anticommunist wings of the Catholic church. Both conclude that the homosocial and aggressively gendered culture of Hoover's FBI had a significant influence on how Americans thought about crime, family, and politics in the middle decades of the 20th century. If an institution is the lengthened shadow of a man, they suggest, then American culture is in part the shadow of an institution.

Despite Strunk's subtitle—*An American Obsession in the Reign of J. Edgar Hoover*—the FBI plays a significant role only in the first half of her book. The opening three chapters focus on the 1930s, emphasizing Hoover's distaste for female criminals as "dirty, filthy, diseased women" (31). As Strunk points out, Hoover exhibited an almost pathological interest in female deviance during these years, blaming seductive and venal gun molls for luring otherwise innocent men into crime. He found a receptive audience in the decade's emerging Hollywood culture, which established both the upright G-Man and the beautiful but dangerous female gangster as cinematic types.

In the book's second half, Strunk leaves behind the "reign of J. Edgar Hoover" to examine female outlaws whose notoriety post-dated the director's 1972 death. By contrast with the earlier chapters, the subjects here are political radicals: kidnapped-heiress-turned-revolutionary Patty Hearst; her onetime compatriot Kathleen Soliah, unearthed by the FBI in 1999 as Minnesota housewife Sara Jane Olsen; and Black Panther activist Assata Shakur, who escaped from prison in 1979 and was last seen living in Cuba. *Wanted Women* provides an engaging account of the 1970s' strange cultural brew, with its simultaneous romanticization and condemnation of revolutionary politics. Yet one can't help but wonder what happened to all of the female radicals, deviants, and criminals of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. No woman preoccupied Hoover's FBI more than Ethel Rosenberg, for instance, executed as a communist spy in 1953. And no ex-radical attracted more lurid press coverage than Elizabeth Bentley, who revealed her past as a Russian agent and named names at the height of the McCarthy era. Strunk's book contains lively prose, engaging scholarship, and terrific photographs, but it is a selective rather than comprehensive chronological account of the FBI's "wanted women."

Rosswurm's book, by contrast, focuses almost exclusively on Hoover's middle years, between the director's acquisition of power during the 1930s gangster wars and the decline of his popular and institutional prowess three decades later. To anyone outside the specialized world of FBI or church historians, the richness of Rosswurm's subject may not be self-evident. In taking on the relationship between the FBI and the Catholic Church, Rosswurm has found a fascinating point of intersection between cultural, political, and social history. Institutionally, the two organizations were remarkably similar: sealed, conservative, homosocial environments concerned with

preserving their moral and professional reputations. Rosswurm argues that neither one would have been entirely the same without the other.

As Rosswurm shows, many of the top figures in both arenas recognized this commonality of interest and outlook. At the FBI, Hoover recruited heavily from Catholic universities, seeking men already trained in the arts of self-discipline, moral conservatism, and anticommunism. Conservative Catholic leaders such as Bishop Fulton Sheen and Indiana Bishop John Francis Noll in turn relied on Hoover to legitimize their anticommunist politics, and to promote widespread religiosity. Some aspects of the FBI/church alliance were highly public; Catholic organizations bestowed innumerable awards on Hoover, for instance. But many of their most significant exchanges, Rosswurm shows, involved secret information and the mutual exchange of surveillance files, especially on the subject of communism. Rosswurm's study is essential not only for historians of anticommunism and conservatism, but for anyone interested in how certain government agencies come to exert widespread cultural influence.

Neither Rosswurm nor Strunk explore what is arguably the most provocative aspect of Hoover's gendered existence: his ambiguous and much-discussed sexuality, including his relationship with FBI associate director Clyde Tolson. This, however, was never their goal. Both scholars approach Hoover as a mythmaker and institution-builder, someone who projected government power into the popular arena in both innovative and dangerous ways. Their works greatly enrich the uneven field of FBI-related studies, and remind us that cultural production played a significant role in Hoover's rise to power.

Yale University Beverly Gage

WELL-READ LIVES: How Books Inspired A Generation of American Women. By Barbara Sicherman. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 2010.

Barbara Sicherman's *Well-Read Lives* is an important study of the impact of reading on young women growing up in the Gilded Age who departed from the traditional path of domesticity to lead lives as journalists, physicians, educators, and social reformers. Sicherman discusses the response of young women to Alcott's *Little Women*. Whereas some modern critics interpret the novel as disciplining young women due to Jo's marriage, the vast majority of young women read the book as opening up horizons for personal fulfillment. Differences in how individuals of different class and ethnic backgrounds read *Little Women* lead into a discussion of the different ways young women read literature. Lonely and ashamed of having "no school experience" (58), Florence Kelley read her father's large library with apparently "neither joy nor enlightenment" (59). In contrast, Alice Stone Blackwell read voraciously with passion.

In the succeeding chapters, Sicherman explores the reading of specific women. She studies the Hamilton family, whose two most famous members were Edith Hamilton and her sister, Alice. What interests Sicherman here is reading as a family affair and how the family immersion in literature continued to connect them in their later

lives and led to a "reciprocal relation . . . between fiction and life" (97). In contrast to this communal reading, M. Carey Thomas's reading started out as a more individualistic endeavor. Burned severely as a child, Thomas developed her reading during a lengthy period of recovery. She emerged as a "Romantic Victorian" (111). After graduating from Cornell, Thomas and four friends from wealthy Baltimore families formed "Friday Night" where they shared their literary readings (they championed rebels like Shelley, Godwin, and Swinburne), their gender politics, and their friendship. There were limits to their rebelliousness, but clearly the spirit of rebellion led to self-definitions that spurred later careers.

Discussing Jane Addams, Sicherman explores the role of Addams' early readings in solving her personal crisis and finding meaning in the establishment of Hull House. Ambiguous about "high culture," Addams was afraid it divorced itself from the real life of social injustice. Her readings of Comte, Tolstoy, and George Eliot helped her see the possibilities of a meaningful life. Among Jewish immigrants, Mary Antin's immersion in books served as an entrance into the American life she celebrated, while for Rose Cohen, books like *David Copperfield* helped her understand her social condition. Ida B. Wells, the subject of the final chapter, claimed that as a youth she had "never read a Negro book" (225). Her early readings included Alcott, Dickens, Bronte, Shakespeare, and the Bible. Sicherman says, however, that Wells had "no difficulty reading herself into the texts of white authors" (225). Certainly Shakespeare, whose passages Wells recited in Memphis lyceums in the early 1880s, contributed to her impressive oratorical style in her activist career as an anti-lynching crusader.

Using archives, diaries, and autobiographies, Sicherman is persuasive on the role of reading in shaping women's lives during the Gilded Age and Progressive period. At the same time she understands that class, race, and gender intertwined with reading. She also persuasively argues that the literary culture of the late nineteenth century was a woman's culture with opportunities for women authors and with the majority of readers being women. However, it is important to remember that the editors of the leading mass circulation magazines that women wrote for and consumed were all men, men who shared certain visions of literature and helped define the women's literary culture and helped serve as arbiters of taste.

Queens College, City University of New York Frank Warren

PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE USA. By Mick Gidley. London: Reaktion Books Ltd. 2011.

Mick Gidley's *Photography and the USA* is from the *Exposures* series, a set of books that looks at photography from various thematic perspectives. This title considers the photographic image from the perspective of American Studies and the result is an interesting, well-written book by an informed author. Gidley divides his investigation into thematic sections regarding technology, history, and social documentation. A fourth section looks at photographs as emblems of the USA and includes photographs made expressly for artistic purposes.

Gidley's expertise in both photography and American Studies blend successfully in the first chapter, "Technologies." Focusing on mechanization, Kodak, and photomechanical reproduction, Gidley identifies that while Americans were not the inventors of the medium, "much of the technological development of photography has taken place in the USA" (31). The USA used this new medium in every conceivable application while continuing to capitalize on technological developments to produce photo processes that were cheap, mass-producible, and functional. While Gidley's coverage of technological developments ends in the 1960s, he concludes the chapter on a prescient note. Quoting Lucia Moholy's 1939 text, *A Hundred Years of Photography,* and Don DeLillo's 1984 book, *White Noise*, Gidley references the tremendous growth of photography, and our increased reliance on photographs.

In the second chapter, "Histories," Gidley emphasizes the American West as a dominant theme, basing a third of the chapter on the topic. Briefly touching on immigration, industrialization, regionalism, race, and racism, he also addresses complications of selecting examples from the vast amount of vernacular photographs generated. The following chapter, "Documents," concerns social documentation and includes many expected references: Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine, Edward Curtis, and the Farm Security Administration, but also features the work of lesser known Frances B. Johnson. Gidley devotes a significant amount of time to the FSA and how it became an inspiration for other documentary projects concerning monuments, courthouses, and architecture. In this chapter Gidley also addresses the September 11 attacks. The final chapter of the text, "Emblems," features work with symbolic reference to the USA and features practitioners with an aesthetic interest in photography. Gidley emphasizes the straight photography tradition, and, to a lesser extent, addresses manipulated modes of photographic expression.

Each chapter moves roughly in chronological order, the strength of Gidley's commentary being on early photography through modernism. He brings many themes from previous texts he has authored to bear here. *Photography and the USA* is heavily illustrated with 107 images for its 184 pages. The chosen illustrations emphasize a historical preference; thirty-three illustrations predate 1900, and thirty-eight represent the time period between 1900 to the end of World War II. A mere four images represent the last ten years, a time period that has certainly changed the USA *and* photography dramatically. Overall, *Photography and the USA* is a lucid and engaging consideration of photographic production and its symbiotic relationship with the USA. The book serves as an excellent introduction to the history of photography and the photograph's role in American culture.

Calvin College Jennifer Steensma Hoag

MULAN'S LEGEND AND LEGACY IN CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES. By Lan Dong. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 2011.

The figure of Mulan, the young Chinese girl who takes her father's place in the military by disguising herself as a man, has become one of the most recognizable characters from the Chinese cultural tradition. Through an examination of Chinese

ballads and history, Chinese American novels, children's picture books and animated features, the book traces its repeated transformations as it moves from historical China to the contemporary United States.

Dong's book parses the meaning of Mulan's Chinese origins through an exploration of a Chinese female heroic tradition represented by the many women who served in military capacities and were celebrated as female heroes. It makes the compelling argument that the heroism demonstrated by each of these women "is still well defined within the Confucian doctrine because her conduct consistently adheres to such core principles as loyalty or filial piety or both," making it "possible for a woman to disrupt social norms by crossing the boundaries defining gender roles without incurring severe punishment" (13). Such an argument intervenes in scholarly discourse that defines Chinese heroism in popular culture in overwhelmingly male terms, such as John Christopher Hamm's *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and the Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel* and Stephen Teo's *Chinese Martial Arts Cinema: The Wuxia Tradition*.

This historical backstory on a female Chinese heroic tradition provides context for later transformations in Chinese American cultural production. Dong sees Chinese American writer Maxine Hong Kingston's treatment of the figure in her novel *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* as another phase of the transformation of Mulan within the United States. Kingston seeks to create a viable model for Chinese American women caught between American and Chinese cultures. While the historical antecedents and previous literary versions of Mulan negotiate Confucian values using a Chinese female heroic tradition, Dong argues that Kingston ultimately casts the warrior aside, viewing her as ineffective for the contemporary Chinese American woman. The inability for Mulan to function as warrior in a contemporary context seems to contradict her multivalent origins in the Chinese heroic and historical tradition. For Kingston, the woman warrior represents a phase through which the Mulan character passes on her way to a more effective way of dealing with her environment.

A transnational feminist lens comes more to bear in the discussion of Disney's treatment of Mulan in animated form. Dong argues that Disney's Mulan sacrifices elements central to her character in the Chinese source material, such as seeking justice, in order to appeal to a global audience. Dong suggests such efforts to make a cross-cultural film, such as including iconic images such as The Great Wall of China, are superficial at best because they use clichéd elements of Chinese culture. Such choices fail to resonate with Chinese audiences who may "interpret the film as an imperialistic appropriation and distortion of Chinese culture" and ultimately "presents a hybrid product that is neither Chinese nor American" (173-4).

In mapping the convoluted trajectory of the Mulan figure, this book adds significantly to transnational American studies by showing the necessity of knowledges of both American and Chinese cultures for the hybrid figure.

Elon University Crystal S. Anderson

WHY AMERICA FAILED. By Morris Berman. John Wiley & Sons. Hoboken, NJ. 2012.

For those who have read the first two books of Morris Berman's trilogy (*The Twilight of American Culture* and *Dark Ages America*), *Why America Failed* reads like a kind of post-mortem. While the first two books survey the deplorable state of our culture in the present, Berman, in his third volume, takes a more historical view, in a forensic sense. What were the causes? What led to where we are now which is moving toward a moribund political and social culture?

Berman distills the dystopia down to its most elemental basis: defined and driven by the hustler mentality with technology as its delivery system. Hustling is material acquisition without restraint (even spending money we don't have, leading to "debt-slavery"). There is no such thing as enough is enough. This has been the driving force of our culture.

Chapter Four, "The Rebuke of History," presents what seems an interesting yet unconventional analysis of the causes of the American Civil War and how they shaped the "techno-hustler" culture which was to engulf the entire country and ultimately be our undoing, though its roots extend back to our beginnings.

Berman writes, "In contrast to the zeal for money that characterized the North, the South was guided by ideals of honor, courage, amiability, and courtesy" (139). This is a diametrically opposed culture compared to the drive for material progress of the North. This was the essence of the clash: two different ways of life. Not just slavery, an abomination by any standards of course. Not just preservation of the Union (which was Lincoln's driving objective).

I hope any detractors of Berman's portrayal of the antebellum South do not make false associations about him supporting a culture which embraced slavery, employing the logic of those who label Mark Twain a racist for using the "N" word in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

So, is this "Goodbye, Farewell, Amen"? Open the gates and flee the realm? Berman does address "the question of where contemporary 'Southerners' can go to escape [the] dystopia . . ." (137). Near the end of the book, Berman discusses pockets of civility and community in Europe and even Mexico. For those who know the reality and stay, there is the monastic option he introduced in *The Twilight of American Culture*. Step off the hustler grid and carve out a little corner, do something meaningful, and even in a small way make a difference. "If you want a non-hustling life," Berman writes, "you are definitely better off hitting the road" (178).

In chapter five, "The Future of the Past," Berman does not offer a light on the horizon, which as he says books of this sort are expected to provide. The culture of the hustler demands that the citizenry remain mired in the fantasy that prosperity is around the corner no matter what. Berman will not pander to that. He quotes Alexis de Tocqueville from 150 years ago: "I know of no country in which, speaking generally, there is less independence of mind and true freedom of discussion than in America" (166). This is the milieu in which we exist.

Palm Beach State College Joseph A. Domino